

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

CHRISTOPHER LEE CALZADA,

Plaintiff,

-against-

COMMONWEALTH OF MASSACHUSETTS,

Defendant.

21-CV-5460 (LTS)

ORDER OF DISMISSAL

LAURA TAYLOR SWAIN, Chief United States District Judge:

Plaintiff, who is currently incarcerated in the Old Colony Correctional Center in Massachusetts, brings this *pro se* action under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, alleging that Defendant violated his constitutional rights. By order dated June 22, 2021, the Court granted Plaintiff's request to proceed without prepayment of fees, that is, *in forma pauperis*.¹

STANDARD OF REVIEW

The Prison Litigation Reform Act requires that federal courts screen complaints brought by prisoners who seek relief against a governmental entity or an officer or employee of a governmental entity. See 28 U.S.C. § 1915A(a). The Court must dismiss a prisoner's *in forma pauperis* complaint, or any portion of the complaint, that is frivolous or malicious, fails to state a claim upon which relief may be granted, or seeks monetary relief from a defendant who is immune from such relief. 28 U.S.C. §§ 1915(e)(2)(B), 1915A(b); *see Abbas v. Dixon*, 480 F.3d 636, 639 (2d Cir. 2007). The Court must also dismiss a complaint if the court lacks subject matter jurisdiction. *See Fed. R. Civ. P. 12(h)(3)*.

¹ Prisoners are not exempt from paying the full filing fee even when they have been granted permission to proceed *in forma pauperis*. *See 28 U.S.C. § 1915(b)(1)*.

While the law mandates dismissal on any of these grounds, the court is obliged to construe *pro se* pleadings liberally, *Harris v. Mills*, 572 F.3d 66, 72 (2d Cir. 2009), and interpret them to raise the “strongest [claims] that they suggest,” *Triestman v. Fed. Bureau of Prisons*, 470 F.3d 471, 474 (2d Cir. 2006) (internal quotation marks and citations omitted) (emphasis in original). But the “special solicitude” in *pro se* cases, *id.* at 475 (citation omitted), has its limits – to state a claim, *pro se* pleadings still must comply with Rule 8 of the Federal Rules of Civil Procedure, which requires a complaint to make a short and plain statement showing that the pleader is entitled to relief.

The Supreme Court has held that, under Rule 8, a complaint must include enough facts to state a claim for relief “that is plausible on its face.” *Bell Atl. Corp. v. Twombly*, 550 U.S. 544, 570 (2007). A claim is facially plausible if the plaintiff pleads enough factual detail to allow the court to draw the inference that the defendant is liable for the alleged misconduct. In reviewing the complaint, the court must accept all well-pleaded factual allegations as true. *Ashcroft v. Iqbal*, 556 U.S. 662, 678-79 (2009). But it does not have to accept as true “[t]hreadbare recitals of the elements of a cause of action,” which are essentially just legal conclusions. *Twombly*, 550 U.S. at 555. After separating legal conclusions from well-pleaded factual allegations, the court must determine whether those facts make it plausible – not merely possible – that the pleader is entitled to relief. *Id.*

BACKGROUND

Plaintiff alleges that the events giving rise to this complaint occurred from “1986 through 2021, 2026.” (ECF 2 ¶ V.) Plaintiff alleges as follows, verbatim:

I have factories, building, hospitals and other areas with property and with protection armor and federal property stolen and use in their favor. They have stolen body armor and have been messing with my body and causing damages and also sending threats to family and other people who is part of my family. They have been using my head/body for their investigations and also to make me

give up. Also usen my other names to stay with property. Basically clausen harm to me/body for gains of stolen property, liberty, securities also depriving society and self from people, society could hear me. Also being held illegally imprison & being use & put through inhumane treatment, (body, mind, ears). Also people being held from saying they could hear me & know everything I am doing. They have been lying saying they could put equipment in their mind to alter their body. Also telling them if they speak up the will kill them. They also threatening & stalking all my family & say the same above & that they are going to kill me with my equipment & anybody who speaks up.

(*Id.*)

Plaintiff seeks damages, the return of “body armor” and other “stolen property.” (*Id.*)

DISCUSSION

To state a claim under 42 U.S.C. § 1983, a plaintiff must allege both that: (1) a right secured by the Constitution or laws of the United States was violated, and (2) the right was violated by a person acting under the color of state law, or a “state actor.” *West v. Atkins*, 487 U.S. 42, 48-49 (1988).

“[A]s a general rule, state governments may not be sued in federal court unless they have waived their Eleventh Amendment immunity or unless Congress has abrogate[d] the states’ Eleventh Amendment immunity” *Gollomp v. Spitzer*, 568 F.3d 355, 366 (2d Cir. 2009) (internal quotation marks and citation omitted, second alteration in original). This immunity shields States from claims for monetary damages, injunctive relief, and retrospective declaratory relief. *See Green v. Mansour*, 474 U.S. 64, 72-74 (1985); *Pennhurst State Sch. & Hosp. v. Halderman*, 465 U.S. 89, 101-02 (1984). Congress has not abrogated the immunity of the States for claims arising under section 1983, and the Commonwealth of Massachusetts has not waived its Eleventh Amendment immunity. *See Afrasiabi v. Commonwealth of Massachusetts*, 272 F. Supp. 3d 256, 261 (D. Mass. 2017)

Accordingly, Plaintiff’s claims against Massachusetts are dismissed under the doctrine of Eleventh Amendment immunity, and because these claims are frivolous. *See* 28 U.S.C.

§ 1915(e)(2)(B)(i), (iii); *Montero v. Travis*, 171 F.3d 757, 760 (2d Cir. 1999) (“A complaint will be dismissed as ‘frivolous’ when ‘it is clear that the defendants are immune from suit.’” (quoting *Neitzke v. Williams*, 490 U.S. 319, 327 (1989))).²

District courts generally grant a *pro se* plaintiff an opportunity to amend a complaint to cure its defects, but leave to amend is not required where it would be futile. *See Hill v. Curcione*, 657 F.3d 116, 123–24 (2d Cir. 2011); *Salahuddin v. Cuomo*, 861 F.2d 40, 42 (2d Cir. 1988). Because the defects in Plaintiff’s complaint cannot be cured with an amendment, the Court declines to grant Plaintiff leave to amend his complaint.

CONCLUSION

Plaintiff’s complaint, filed *in forma pauperis* under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(1), is dismissed pursuant to 28 U.S.C. § 1915(e)(2)(B)(i)-(iii).

The Court certifies under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3) that any appeal from this order would not be taken in good faith, and therefore *in forma pauperis* status is denied for the purpose of an appeal. *See Coppedge v. United States*, 369 U.S. 438, 444-45 (1962).

The Clerk of Court is directed to mail a copy of this order to Plaintiff and note service on the docket.

SO ORDERED.

Dated: June 28, 2021
New York, New York

/s/ Laura Taylor Swain
LAURA TAYLOR SWAIN
Chief United States District Judge

² Plaintiff previously filed a civil rights complaint against Massachusetts in the United States District Court for the District of Massachusetts. *See Calzada v. Commonwealth of Mass.*, No. 19-CV-10039 (D. Mass. Jan. 10, 2019) (dismissing without prejudice civil rights complaint seeking to bring criminal charges).